



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Public Library

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San Diego Public Library

Exhibition Commemorating Argentina's 30,000 "Disappeared" to Open at Mission Valley Branch Library

SAN DIEGO – "Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry," an art installation, poetry translation project, and other events related to the fate of Argentina's 30,000 "Disappeared," will open April 3 at the Mission Valley Branch Library and continue through May 28. A reception for the public will be held Sunday, April 10, from 3 to 5 p.m. in the library's Community Room and Gallery.

The creator of "Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry" is Virginia Giannoni of Buenos Aires. She is a well-known journalist and artist whose dedication to human rights issues and Argentina's "Disappeared" has become paramount. She will arrive in San Diego in early April and deliver lectures at San Diego State University Library and the Mission Valley Branch Library.

Almost 30 years have passed since a military junta overthrew Argentina's democratically-elected government on March 24, 1976. Immediately after assuming power, the junta embarked on a campaign to wipe out its opponents. In a six-year reign of terror to cleanse the country of "subversives," nearly 30,000 people, including students, young workers and intellectuals, as well as bystanders with no political agenda, vanished without a trace. Subsequently they became known as "desaparecidos," the Spanish word for "the disappeared."

In 1983, after democracy was restored, a national commission was appointed to investigate the fate of the Disappeared. Its report revealed the systematic abductions of men, women (some pregnant) and children; the existence of about 340 well-organized secret detention centers; and the methodic use of torture and murder. According to former president, Carlos Menem, records of the atrocities were destroyed by the military, following the 1982 Falklands War. Most of the victim's families have been unable to recover the bodies of their loved ones and the perpetrators of the crimes have not been brought to justice.

The exhibition/installation component of "Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry" will consist of a series of vertical banners arranged edge to edge and bearing approximately 600 black and white photographs of individuals who disappeared. Each image, paired with a commemorative poem written by the victim's friends or family members, was selected by Giannoni from tributes that appear annually in *Página 12*, a Buenos Aires daily. The visual and emotional impact of these newspaper images and

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recordatorios, with each face and poem opening the door to an untold story, is unforgettable. At the Mission Valley Branch Library, members of the public who are bilingual (English and Spanish) will be encouraged to translate these poems, which, in turn, will be entered into a database available worldwide on the Internet. Those fluent in other languages will also be welcome to translate.

A major force in bringing "Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry" to San Diego is the founder of The Survival of the Collective Memory Project, Joan Lindgren. Lindgren, a longtime San Diego resident, is a frequent visitor to Argentina. She is also an author, teacher, poet, and internationally recognized translator of Latin American and Spanish poetry. Her critically acclaimed and best-known book, "Unspeakable Tenderness: Selected Poems of Juan Gelman," is the definitive English translation of Gelman's poems. Gelman, Argentina's leading poet and one of the greatest contemporary writers in the Spanish language, is the father-in-law of María Claudia García Irureta Goyena de Gelman, one of the most celebrated cases in the annals of the Disappeared. María Claudia was eight-and-a-half months pregnant at the time she and her husband, Marcelo Ariel (Gelman's son), were kidnapped in Buenos Aires by members of the Uruguayan military. Marcelo was murdered immediately and María Claudia was never seen again, although, 23 years later, her daughter was safely recovered.

Lindgren is currently writing "Translating Argentina," an account of her travels in Argentina, including translations of testimonials given by the mothers and children of the Disappeared. Lindgren will deliver a lecture on the cultural evolution and meaning of the tango, Argentina's national dance. The lecture will accompany a tango demonstration by San Diego's leading tango artists, El Mundo del Tango.

The Mission Valley Branch Library is the first stop on an international tour of "Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry." Related events will include film screenings, lectures and tango demonstrations and workshops. A complete schedule of these events will be available at <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/>.

The Mission Valley Branch Library is located at 2123 Fenton Parkway, next to the Ikea store and the Fenton Parkway trolley stop. Library hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 2 to 10 p.m. For more information about "Poesía Diaria," the public can call (619) 692-0394 or visit the library's Web site at <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/>. The library can be reached at (858) 573-5007. All events related to "Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry" are free of charge.

"Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry" has relevance to anyone interested in literature, modern history, or the struggle for human rights, including the tens of millions worldwide who have lost friends and relatives in similar situations. Space in the exhibition will be reserved for San Diegans to post photographs and poems honoring their own "disappeared."

"Poesía Diaria/Everyday Poetry" is sponsored by The Survival of the Collective Memory Project; San Diego State University: Library and Departments of Latin American Studies and Spanish and Portuguese; and the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library.

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